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THAI COMMUNISTS ATTACK US-OCCUPIED AIR BASE

Communist terrorists have made no attempt to follow up their raid on the Udorn Air Base, which appears to have been locally inspired.

The brief night attack on 26 July, which apparently was targeted mainly against US military aircraft, was carried out by some ten terrorists armed with AK-47 automatic weapons and crude demolition charges. The raiders were quite inept but managed, nevertheless, to damage two aircraft by gunfire while killing one Thai and wounding four American defenders. Two of the Communists were killed.

Although Thai military and police units have now been alerted to attacks against US-occupied air bases in insurgent-infested northeast Thailand, US officials consider the bases still vulnerable to similar attacks. The raid may, however, prod Bangkok

to implement more effective base security measures, heretofore handled by local officials.

The lack of discipline and the poor condition of the equipment of the attackers suggest that the raid was undertaken on local initiative. Thai insurgents have, however, traditionally received training, arms, and guidance from the Pathet Lao and Hanoi.

The Thai Communists have been notoriously unsuccessful in their military efforts against Thai security forces and may have hoped that a dramatic move would improve their image and also demonstrate their capability to strike a blow against the US "aggressor." With national elections coming up, the Thai Communists may also believe that the time is right to bring susceptible and politically influential Thais to question the continuation of a massive US presence.

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